# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1666
13 February 2002

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

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**LETTER DATED 12 FEBRUARY 2002 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE PRESS RELEASE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH THE STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, MR. JOHN R. BOLTON, TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of the press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 28 January 2002 in connection with the statement made by the Under-Secretary of State of the United States of America, Mr. John R. Bolton on 24 January 2002.

I should be grateful if the press release could be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed to the delegations of all member States of the Conference and non-member States participating in its work.

(*Signed*): Leonid A. SKOTNIKOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation
to the Conference on Disarmament

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**PRESS RELEASE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, MR. JOHN R. BOLTON**

Moscow has taken note of the statement made by the United States Under-Secretary of State, Mr. John R. Bolton, to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, setting forth the main elements of the policy of the administration of Mr. George W. Bush in the area of international security and disarmament.

Russia shares the understanding of the need to marshal, to the maximum possible extent, the efforts of the international community in fighting international terrorism and countering new threats and challenges. Similarly, we cannot but agree with the United States proposals to step up efforts to strengthen the internationally recognized non-proliferation standards and regimes and to preclude even the slightest possibility of weapons of mass destruction being turned into instruments of blackmail and terror.

All the same, Moscow is convinced that the most important means of strengthening strategic stability and international security under today's conditions must be the safeguarding and strengthening of the existing arms control and non-proliferation treaties and agreements.

At the same time, a number of United States approaches to disarmament issues - and these too have been reflected, yet again, in Mr. Bolton's statement - actually complicate the situation and weaken the international legal system in the area of disarmament. These include the United States decision to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty, a step which Russia considers to be a mistake. They also include the unwillingness of Washington to ratify the START II Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, as well as its rejection of the continuation of work on the verification mechanism under the Biological Weapons Convention. The overwhelming majority of countries support the launching of a negotiation process in the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; only the United States fails to see any need for this.

Russia regards the Conference on Disarmament as the sole international negotiating forum for the elaboration of universal disarmament agreements. In the context of globalization, we believe that there is no other way to tackle international problems than through extensive cooperation among States. We once again declare our readiness to search for mutually acceptable solutions as to how to begin the substantive work of the Conference, in the spirit of the compromise proposals on the programme of work already put forward by the Russian Federation.

28 January 2002

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